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MODERN CALVINISM

EXAMINED.



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MODERN CALVINISM

EXAMINED.

Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.

JER. vi. 16:

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. In the following essay, some Greek quotations have been introduced merely for the sake of reference; but as they are invariably translated, the general reader is requested to observe, that their total omission will in no manner interfere with the sense of their respective passages.

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INTRODUCTION.

In religion, as well as in philosophy, the hypotheses of ingenious men, have ever been the most fruitful sources of error. Man's intellectual pride, spurns the thought of attaining knowledge, by a patient induction of particulars, and would feign grasp at it wholly and at once. Hence every new discoverer rejects the hypotheses of his predecessors to make way for one of his own, which in his own imagination, explains all the phenomena of that subject, to the study of which his mind has been directed. Among the many theories in religion, which an acquaintance with Ecclesiastical history introduces to notice, there are two distinguished for their importance, and for the numbers of their followers, from the days of the apostles, to the present time; I refer to those which are designated in the Protestant Church, Calvinistic, and Arminian. Many

of the advocates of these theories, must be allowed by all moderate men of either party to have gone to unwarrantable lengths, in support of their favorite views: and we think it will be found that they were carried on to those extremes, just in proportion as they endeavoured to mould the Scriptures, to their preconceived theory, instead of reversing the business, and following the truths, revealed in Scripture, no matter what theory was established or destroyed thereby. Of the two systems just mentioned, the Arminian has generally been the most popular, but not satisfied with this advantage, its advocates too frequently through ignorance or design, assume distorted views of doctrine, as the veritable dogmas of their religious opponents, and heap upon their tenets, the odium of the veriest figments. Anxious to avoid these objections, so repeatedly and angrily insisted upon by the one side, many learned men amongst the Calvinists, to whom such objections appeared really formidable, have at various times labored to refute them, with more or less success; while others not

content to follow in the track of their predecessors, boldly endeavoured to open novel paths for themselves, and by new and distinct hypotheses succeeded in satisfying their own minds, and those of others, that they have thrown such a flood of light upon the controversy, that every objection fades away, and that both systems harmonise, into one great plan of evangelical truth.

Amongst the moderns, the two most celebrated for such attempts, were Baxter and Williams; the former inclining as much towards Arminianism in his theory, as the latter towards Calvinism. Dr. Williams whose theory comes more immediately under our consideration, taught, that Christ died for every individual of Adam's race, yet he believed with the Calvinist, that none but the elect will be finally saved. To the simple fact of Christ's death for all men he gives the name of *God's rectoral intention*, while the more direct manifestation of his grace, consists in the particular application of this salvation to the elect. Thus Williams and his followers conceive, that they avoid

every difficulty, but it would be hard to persuade others, to the truth of this. On the contrary, this theory not only concentrates upon itself, all the difficulties both of the Arminian and the Calvinist, but even entails upon itself, some peculiar and formidable objections. For in the first place, it conduces to no practical utility, since even in the estimation of its warmest supporters, not a single individual of those called the non-elect, will enrol himself amongst the children of God. Salvation is still restricted to those to whom the Holy Spirit applies the blood of Christ, and thus the whole theory resembles a complicated piece of machinery, which is intended to produce no effect, except it be to please the curiosity of triflers in mechanics. Would this show wisdom in an earthly artificer? And will not the Judge of all the earth do right? In the second place this doctrine represents the Deity, as if at variance with himself, for if Christ died for every individual of the race of Adam, and if that death prove perfectly useless to all those to whom the Holy Spirit applies it not,

such a procedure would resemble the conduct of an earthly benefactor, who having divided a large estate into a great number of small portions, intending to give them to a certain number of individuals, and should have information sent to them that the title deeds were waiting for their acceptance, yet upon application, many of the invited would find those very title deeds, without the seals, which render them the valid documents of their inheritance. Would not this be to take away with one hand, what he gives with the other? And is such conduct to be attributed to the Deity? Besides, this view of things would introduce, a distinction to say the least of it, very unscriptural, for in what part of the sacred records is the blood of the Saviour mentioned, without salvation being intimated, as its inseparable concomitant? 'But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship, one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' 1 John i.7. 'Who his ownself, bare our sins, in his own body on the tree, that we being dead

to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.' 1 Peter ii. 24. It is most true, that the Holy Spirit, must apply the blood of Christ to the guilty consciences of men; that he must enlighten the darkened understanding; must sanctify the unholy affections, and in short, place the seal of God upon the believer, 'until the day of redemption,' but all this in ratification of the work of Christ, and accomplishing the intention of the Deity. 'When the spirit of truth is come,' said the Saviour to his apostles, "he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself," that is, he shall not act arbitrarily, or on his own mere authority, but he shall speak or act, in unison with the established determination, of the triune Deity, as Christ goes on to show, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. 'He shall glorify me," not himself by applying to a limited number, a work which I intend for an unlimited number, 'for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.' John xvi. 13. 14.

NATURAL STATE OF MAN.

Some Arminians to support their doctrine of universal redemption, maintain that man although very far gone from original righteousness, yet being not altogether fallen from it, that he still retains a self-determining power, of returning to God. Others of them reject this view, and believe, that while all men lost original righteousness in Adam, yet that Christ's redemption has procured a partial restoration, for every individual of Adam's race, whereby he may, or may not, work out his salvation of his own free-will through the Saviour. In these statements there is at least some sort of consistency, but modern Calvinists, are on this point in the utmost perplexity. Dr. Williams maintains that the blood of Christ, is an universal remedy, provided for every child of Adam, and yet with the greatest inconsistency, nullifies this remedy, in respect to the non-elect, by clearly showing the absurdity of believing in a self-determining power of the will; and also proving the complete depravity of man.

Viewed in another light the absurdity is still more glaring, the blood of Christ is presented to us as a remedy, and yet it is not to be considered remedial, without its application by the Holy Spirit; but in respect to the non-elect, it was never intended to be applied by the Holy Spirit, and of course, towards them it was never intended to be remedial; that is, in plain language, it is a remedy which is no remedy. The more modern followers of the Doctor, have not been able to remove the difficulty in the smallest degree, for thus one of them expresses himself. "By it (general redemption) liberty was procured for all: but by it, liberty was imparted to none."* Procuring liberty for individuals, without the most distant intention of imparting it, is to say the least of it, a curious sort of liberty. But to speak of liberty, without the idea of its possession by a moral agent, is to speak in strict reasoning of a nonentity; for liberty is nothing else but the freedom of a moral agent. There is

* Dodsworth's two Sermons on General Redemption.

indeed a popular use of the word liberty, such as when we say that one man has obtained the liberty of another, when the real meaning of the phrase is, that the former individual has had liberty imparted to him, to impart liberty to the other, when, and in what manner he may be able. The imperfection of the language corresponds, with the imperfection of human agency; but such popular phraseology can never be applied to the perfect agency of the Almighty, with whom the procurement of liberty, and the certainty of its impartation, are intimately connected. Here a cavil may be raised from a supposed analogy between the actions of men and the actions of Deity, from the difference of times in the procurement and application of what is here termed liberty.— To this we reply, that the order of bestowment, as necessarily entered into the plan of Jehovah, as the original procurement, and that the connexion between such order of bestowment and procurement, is sure and steadfast in the designs of Him, who ‘is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,’ and

with whom 'one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.' 2 Pet. iii.8. During all this time, we have been using the word liberty in accordance to these theorists calling themselves modern Calvinists, which seems a term used as descriptive of spiritual advantages, which it appears to be utterly out of the power of these speculatists to explain in what way they are available by the very individuals for whom they were obtained. As for liberty in the common usage of the term, no such benefit was required to be procured for man, as a moral agent; for a moral agent, without free-agency, ceases to be an accountable one. But to return to the use of the word liberty, by the last quoted writer, if it express any thing intelligible, in respect to his theory, it must mean, either a spiritual liberty possessed, or a spiritual liberty which may be obtained.— It may be said, that it cannot be meant in the former sense; as the next proposition denies its impartation, and of course, its possession; but the latter sense is also equally destroyed, by the same means, for according

to the theory, if God impart not, man obtains not, and thus the destruction, of the only two meanings, which can be attached to the proposition, leaves us but the mere jingle of words. Now as we suppose that something was intended by this proposition, of liberty being procured for all men, let us return to the dilemma before instituted upon it; if the liberty here maintained, be a spiritual blessing possessed, the supposition is equivalent to the second Arminian supposition, mentioned in the former part of this section, namely, that some indescribable restoration, has happened to all men. If the second part of the dilemma be adopted, namely, that it is a blessing attainable by man's unassisted natural powers, this would be equivalent to the first-mentioned Arminian system. Lastly, if the blessing be obtainable by the gracious implantation of power, the supposition ranks under the second Arminian view. Now against all these shades of doctrine, however varied, the Holy Scriptures hold forth the strongest possible negative, in their constant description of the

natural state of man, showing in an unbroken chain of evidence, historical, devotional, and doctrinal, that man in his fallen state, acts in direct contradiction to the will of God, thus summarily expressed by Paul, ‘the carnal mind is enmity against God,’ more literally, ‘the wisdom of the flesh* is enmity against God.’ Rom viii. 7. It need scarcely be remarked, that the word ‘flesh’ is almost uniformly used to signify man, in his depraved state, whilst in no one passage, wherein it occurs, is there the shadow of a hint, that man in such a state has been placed, theoretically or practically, by an indescribable, and partial renewal of any kind, in *equilibrio*, between good and evil, or changed in any way from a tendency towards evil, to a tendency towards good.— In the verse just quoted, we are told of the wisdom of the flesh, and upon comparing it with another passage in a very different context, we obtain the most unanswerable evidence, that this wisdom, is more vividly

* το φρονημα της σαρκος.

efficient, to accomplish 'the desires of the flesh and of the spirit,' than the wisdom of the renewed man, is to accomplish the will of God, for said our Saviour; 'The children of this world, are in their generation, wiser* than the children of light.' Luke xvi. 8. And this wisdom, is placed in direct opposition, to heavenly wisdom by the prophet, 'they are wise to do evil, but to do good, they have no knowledge.' Jer. iv. 22. This is also the wisdom, by which, Paul declares, 'the world knew not God.' 1 Cor. i. 21. And no language can more powerfully describe the alienation of heart in man, from God, consequent from this carnal mind, or wisdom, than the last-mentioned Apostle makes use of to the Ephesian converts, 'And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:' among whom also,

* Φρονιμοτεροι.

not only you Gentiles, but mankind universally, both Jews and Gentiles, 'WE ALL had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desire of the *flesh*, and of the mind, and were by *nature*, *children of wrath*, even as others.' Ephes. ii. 1. 2. 3. That this was not the character of man, coming from the hand of his Creator, as it is what reason would expect, so it is what revelation establishes, for the verdict of the Deity himself, in respect to man as well as to his other works, when they had sprung into existence from his creative mandate, was, that they were all 'very good.' Gen. i. 31. But Adam swerved from the path of righteousness, and entailed upon all his posterity this 'deadness' to the things of God, and stamped upon them that defect by which, through the use of their natural powers, their character is found to be that of the 'children of wrath.' 'By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin.' Rom. v. 12. I here abstain from any abstract reasoning on this point, as foreign to the nature of the present Work. I adduce these things, *as facts* revealed in the

Scriptures of truth, and elucidated by the whole history of mankind. Before the flood God gives a summary description of the character of man. Gen. vi. 3. 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh.' I remark in respect to the latter part of this verse, that the word 'also,' in its present most frequent application, produces an awkwardness, so to speak, which is avoided by a more correct translation. 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man, *inasmuch*, as he is flesh.' The pronoun *he*, refers by the Hebrew construction, to the whole species of man, meaning that 'all mankind is flesh.' Some would here probably object that the Deity speaks of the peculiarly depraved character of man before the flood : but this objection is quashed by one of those happy, although apparently inadvertent coincidences which form one of the internal evidences to the truth of Scripture, by showing the exact coherence of its doctrines throughout. 'That which is born of the flesh, is flesh,' said our Saviour, in the most important conversation

ever recorded for the instruction of mankind, in which he explains to Nicodemus, in plain terms the nature of that radical change of character, requisite to constitute any individual a child of God, which doctrine was frequently but more metaphorically insisted on by Moses and the Prophets, and of course, 'a master in Israel,' should have been acquainted with it; had not the pride and 'wisdom' of the human heart revolted against the humbling truth, that in 'the flesh dwelleth no good thing,' and that except the Spirit of the living God, quicken the alienated rebel, his character will for ever remain unchanged. The whole sentiment is thus expressed in the short and emphatic contrast used by the Saviour. 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.' John iii. 6. The tenor of Scripture doctrine, then goes to prove the utter alienation of the heart of man from God, and this alienation varies with the character of every individual, from the exterior decency of the self-complacent devotee, down to the shamelessness of the

reckless profligate. Before I conclude this section, it may not be amiss in reference to professed Arminians, to make a few observations upon part of a verse already quoted. ‘My Spirit shall not always strive with man,’ which is frequently brought forward by them as a proof of the new state into which man is introduced by the new dispensation. But even granting that the translation of the authorised version was correct, the explanation of Arminianism, produces a singularly curious jumble of ideas, for in the first place, we have a partial renewal of power or ability ; and in addition to this, we have the Deity struggling to further this renewal, and yet all of no manner of use ; ‘the flesh’ in man is too strong for all the agency employed. If we wished to profit by the labour of such commentators, we might triumphantly claim this as an additional proof of the truth of the present section ; but we reject both the criticism and the doctrine, which it is brought forward to subserve. The word translated ‘to strive’ invariably signifies to govern, or rule, to judge, or plead against, and the pas-

sage in question, is thus correctly rendered by Parkhurst, ‘ My Spirit shall not always judge or rule among men,’ alluding to God’s determination, to destroy the whole world by the flood.

SALVATION COMPLETELY OF FREE GRACE.

The proposition to be proved in this section, namely, ‘ That salvation is completely of free grace,’ might be established by treating it, as an evident inference, from what was proved in the foregoing section ; for if all men be dead in trespasses and sins,—if they eagerly ‘ fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind,’ in short, if they be ‘ children of wrath.’ Ephes. ii. 3. it necessarily follows, that to be rescued from such thralldom, must come from another influence, superior to the inclinations of their own hearts. But we are not left to mere inference, no truth is laid down more explicitly in Scripture, than that salvation is of God, and of him alone. ‘ By grace are ye saved through faith : and that not of yourselves, it is the

gift of God : not of works, lest any man should boast." Ephes. ii. 8. 9. No language could be used more explicitly to demonstrate, that salvation is entirely the free gift of God, perfectly irrespective of the characters of men.

The Apostle not content with the general proposition, that salvation is solely by the grace of God, seems determined to leave no way whatever, whereby a caviller might elude his meaning, and therefore he breaks the passage into short sentences, each affirming strongly the doctrine in question, while each adds still more force to the preceding one. The general proposition "Salvation is by grace through faith," or in other words, God saves us by his gratuitous favor and applies that salvation to our hearts by faith, as the instrument, or mode of application, in this world, 'and that, not of yourselves, it is the gift of God,' a gift 'without money and without price,' not only gratuitously bestowed, but absolutely implanted in the heart, by the Spirit of the living God, waiting for no vainly imagined

co-operation, from an alienated heart, which of itself, 'receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.' 1 Cor. ii. 14. but changing that depraved heart, leading it, from darkness to light, and delivering it from the bondage of Satan, and translating it into the liberty of the children of light. That the apostle intended the phrase, 'and that not of yourselves,' to convey this meaning to the Ephesian church, is plainly shown, by the succeeding sentence, 'not of works,'* the sameness of the construction, impressing a similar emphasis of negation. Our opponents readily grant, that salvation in no way depends upon our works, and the connexion of the sentences prove, that the application of salvation is equally 'not of ourselves,' that is, in other words, it is not to be traced to any other source, save to the sovereign disposal of divine grace. And this free un-merited favor, depends upon no fickle, or

* ουκ εξ υμων, ουκ εξ εγωων

contingent foundation, being based upon the eternal counsel of the unchangeable Deity. 'In whom' (Christ) says Paul, 'we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated, according to the purpose of him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will' Eph. i. 11. Forceibly descriptive of the discriminating selection of God, in the objects of his favor, as this passage is in the authorised translation: yet it falls short of the force in the original, for the metaphor, is taken from the circumstance of the allotment of inheritance, in territory, acquired by conquest or by treaty, to the privileged freemen of a state, by the government or magistracy. The word translated, 'we have obtained an inheritance,' is in the passive form, and would be thus more literally rendered, 'In whom we have been allotted our inheritance, being fore-selected, or definitely chosen out, according to the purpose of him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.' In another passage, we have expressed the intimate connexion between the purpose of God, and his free-grace, as if to

mark out their eternal co-existence. 'Who hath saved us, and called us, with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose, and grace, given to us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.' 2 Tim. i. 9. To comment upon this remarkable verse, would be only to weaken its force, but there is an important distinction laid down, between 'purpose,' and 'grace,' as marked out by the adjectives appended to these words, which I presume few English readers would perceive, until pointed out to them. I refer to the words 'own,' and 'given,' for the reader will perceive, that I have left out the words, 'which was,' as they are not in the original. The word translated 'own,' is one of these, which being peculiar to a language, other languages possess no term completely corresponding to it, it means, that which is intimately peculiar to whatever it is joined. Thus in the present passage, it refers to the regard which God had to his own glory, unrevealed to us, in respect to that purpose, or determination, which secures the salvation of his people, and in

consequence of which, grace was virtually 'given' to them in Christ Jesus, before ever the world was, 'according as they were chosen in him, before the foundation of the world,' Eph. i. 4. But the nature of the salvation of Christ, and the very name he received in relation to it, proves the doctrine under consideration, 'She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name, Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins,' Mat. i. 21, now Jesus signifies, Jehovah the Saviour, because Jesus is the Greek name, for Jehoshua, or Joshua, as is plain from Acts vii. 45, and Heb. iv. 8. Hoshea, or Oshea which signifies *the Saviour*, was originally, the name of the Son of Nun, but Moses prophetically changed it from Oshea to Jehoshua or Joshua, which two last words are composed of identically the same letters in Hebrew, and differ in sound merely from the rules of Hebrew pronunciation, both meaning *Jehovah the Saviour*, and applied to the great successor of the Jewish lawgiver, who in various ways was a most eminent type of the great 'captain of our salvation,' for as

Joshua led his own peculiar people to safety and saved them from the dangers by which they were surrounded ; so he to whom this name was applied, not typically but essentially, loves his own, ‘ who are in the world John xiii. ‘ with an everlasting love.’ Jer. xxxi 3. leads them on to the heavenly Canaan, having rescued them from every foe temporal and spiritual, for he saves them from their sins. Mat. i. 21. and ‘ he will rest in his love.’ Zeph. iii. 17. But if they be saved from their sins, then the salvation of the objects of our Saviour’s mission must have been perfectly completed, without any contingency having been allowed to mar his work, for contingency and permission, are things widely distinct in respect to the government of the Almighty. Sin is permitted, and its partial admission amongst created beings, will most certainly be ultimately made, conducive to the benefit of the vast majority ; but where he intends positively to obviate it, no contingency can be supposed to frustrate his intention, and say, with a prevailing voice,— ‘ what doest thou?’ If we appeal to the

volume of nature, we find it strongly engraven there, that nothing has been created in vain, from the insignificant and voluntarily moving insect, upwards to the solemn march of the planets in immensity of space ; and are we to suppose, that the sublimest work of the Deity, ever submitted to the consideration of angels or of men, can be in any way in vain ? Surely not, the great work of Redemption has accomplished its every object, the Saviour ‘saves his people from their sins,’ and ‘none shall pluck them out of his hands’ John x. 28. What then becomes of the supposed irrefragable argument of our opponents that salvation is not connected in Scripture, with the redemption purchased by the blood of Christ, as before referred to in the commencement of this work, but with the work of Jehovah; the Spirit, in the application of that Redemption to the elect ; or in other words, that the great work of the Saviour is as ineffectual in any number of given cases, as it is effectual in respect to others. Now not to dwell on the very meaning of the word, or upon the ideas which are legitimately

connected with it, we shall for the present simply appeal to the Scriptures, to see whether the sacred writers consider it in any manner inefficacious. For example, St. Peter thus exhorts those to whom he wrote, to an holy life and conversation. ‘Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb, without blemish and without spot, who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times, for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God,’ 1 Pet. i. 18, 19, 20, 21. There appears here to be no intimation, of any theoretical distinction in the glorious work of redemption, or any fanciful division between the *price* of redemption, and redemption itself. The inestimable price, here emphatically styled by Peter ‘the precious blood of Christ,’ seems not from the tenor of the apostle’s reasoning,

to have been offered up in vain. That this great price, was sufficient for this world, nay for the universe, if intentionally given for it, has always been asserted by Calvinistic writers, and that Dr. Williams himself (when he forgot his favorite theory, which forgetfulness, I think is sometimes apparent throughout his works,) attached no other ideas, to what he calls, the price of redemption, as distinguished from redemption itself, will appear from the quotation taken out of his work, written against the bishop of Lincoln, in defence of 'Modern Calvinism,' and with which I shall conclude this section.— Here however, I would add, that the Doctor probably followed Locke, in this distinction upon the word redemption; for the latter advocates the opinion in his commentary on the epistle to the Romans, whilst in the same place, he quotes Eph. i. 7, and the parallel passage, Col. i. 14. 'In whom, we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins,' wherein the apostle affirms in direct terms, that redemption and forgiveness of sins, may be used as conver-

tible terms; from whence it necessarily follows, either that the sins of 'those chosen in Christ,' have been forgiven, or else that all the sins of every individual of Adam's race have been forgiven, and therefore *universal salvation* must inevitably follow from *universal redemption*; for it would be absurd to attempt proving from Scripture, that Christ redeemed some men in one way, and others in another. Mr. Locke, indeed endeavours to evade the force of this reasoning by asserting, that we cannot adhere too closely to the metaphor expressed by the word redemption, because such strict adherence would lead to the conclusion, that the ransom should be legally paid to Satan, who is represented as having mankind captives. Now that sinners are captives of Satan, is most true, but this circumstance has happened, not from any original right in Satan to possess them, but from the justice of the Deity, allowing them to be thus led captive, as a punishment for sin; and consequently Satan was transformed into a mere instrument to punish. Indeed so far was he

from having any right in himself *dē jure*, to possess them as a master, that it was merely from the permission of God, he was allowed to tempt them from original rectitude. The redemption in Christ Jesus therefore, had only reference to his Heavenly Father, whereby his justice might harmonize with mercy, and who, far from acknowledging any right in Satan to retain us captives, ‘delivered’ or rather plucked ‘us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.’ Col. i. 13, 14. Thus the deliverance effected by the redemption of Christ, refers to our restoration from a state of alienation from God, to a state of favor: and as for redemption and its application being disunited, it is only in a logical sense they are so, for the very nature of the former, infers the certainty of the latter, nor are we left in this case to the mere reason of the thing, for Paul in his beautiful description of redemption, affirms, that the application of it to the people of God, forms as it were part

of its ideal meaning. 'Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from *all iniquity*, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' Tit. ii. 13, 14. It is curious to observe how Dr. Williams throws over-board his distinction concerning redemption, in answering a quotation from Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, who like himself argues for the universality of redemption, but never dreaming of altering the meaning of the word by theoretical distinctions, states the legitimate consequences of the universal scheme. 'Among these quotations, (writes Dr. Williams) we also learn that *all mankind are redeemed from all their iniquities*. Thus the last-mentioned author, (Hilary.) "He is good in whom we hope, and hope is to be placed in him, because he is merciful, because there is abundant redemption with him, for he redeemed *all mankind from all their iniquities*." This is to extend the notion of universal redemption, far beyond that of the advocates for universal resto-

ration ! “ *Redemit ab omnibus iniquitatibus suis universos !*” Surely, this is a circle to which his Lordship’s ideas of redemption, however universal cannot expand themselves. Had Hilary said that the *price* of redemption is adequate for all mankind, we could listen to him ; but what scriptural sentiment—what principle of common reason, or what view of human society, can justify the representation as here quoted—what truth can be more certain even to ocular demonstration, than the reverse of Hilary’s assertion,—that all mankind are *not* redeemed from all their iniquities : and that on the contrary, a large proportion of mankind are willing captives to them.* That the *price* of redemption was adequate for any purpose to which it was specifically applied, was never denied by any writer ; the assumption that it was specifically applied to purposes, which will never be accomplished, is one of the principal sources of all the absurdities of what is styled Modern Calvinism. Surely, our modern

* Modern Calvinism defended, p. 131.

London, 1812. *

Calvinistic friends, dearly as they may prize nice distinctions will not here put in a cavil, and say, that they believe in *General Redemption*, while they reject *Universal Redemption*, for if General Redemption mean any thing according to their interpretation, it must mean that Christ died for every son of Adam, and Universal Redemption goes not a jot beyond this.

SALVATION NOT TO BE ASCRIBED TO MAN.

The Scriptures are fully as explicit and as emphatic, in ascribing the application and accomplishment of the work of salvation, to God alone, as they are in ascribing its original design to him. ‘As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.’ John i. 12. 13. The apostle, in this very remarkable passage seemed to seek with the most scrutinizing anxiety, to refer his readers, to the only

source of conversion, namely God himself, whose spiritual people are not necessarily so by natural descent : they are not ‘ born of blood,’ or in other words, no earthly relationship is able to produce that birth, which constitutes a man the child of God. Nor does this distinguished privilege arise from any exertion of will in man exercised before conversion, although every individual is perfectly free from external compulsion, and consequently his following evil is of his own free will, but more of this in another place. Our present object is to show that man’s will requires the guidance of the great Supreme, for his people are not born of the will ‘ of the flesh,’* nor ‘ of the will of man.’† The terms ‘ flesh’ and ‘ man’ are here used to express the whole spiritual being, in other words, the *soul*, as exercising its faculties, by those inclinations of carnality, and of intellect, to be found in every rational individual, and which produce an ever changing variety, throughout the human family, according as

* σαρκος

† ανδρος

those inclinations predominate, or intermingle. However neither the sensual part of the mind, (*σαρκος*) nor the intellectual part (*ανδρος*) excite the will to good : the only exciter thereto being mentioned, with equal brevity and emphasis, they are born 'of God.' ' If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature,' or more literally, ' there is a new creation, old things are passed away, behold ALL THINGS are become new, and ALL THINGS are of God.' 2 Cor. v. 17, 18. The repetition of the phrase is peculiarly strong, in order evidently to prevent the possibility of mistaking to whom is to be attributed the sole application of the work of salvation. Both the last quoted passages are beautifully parallel to each other, for John affirms, that the people of Christ are born of God (*εκ Θεου*) and Paul affirms, that ' all things' which constitute that new birth, or new creation, (*καινη κτισις*) are 'of God,' (*εκ του Θεου*) Conversion or regeneration, in these passages summarily ascribed to God, appears from different parts of Scripture, to consist of two parts, namely, ' repentance towards God,'

and 'faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.' Now these are not only collectively ascribed as before shown, but when separately considered, each is uniformly referred to the same divine influence, and as this is not denied by our more immediate opponents; it may be considered superfluous to dwell more largely on the subject. There is a text, however, on this point, which is particularly worthy of attention. 'The God of our Fathers,' said Peter to the Jewish Council, 'raised up Jesus whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins.' Acts v. 30. 31. The offices here given to Christ and their intimate connexion, militate strongly against the new doctrine. He is not only a Saviour to purchase favor for his people, but he is also a Sovereign Prince or President, (*αρχηγον*) to distribute them to his chosen people, 'to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins.' Doubtless the Holy Spirit works this repentance in the bosom, and sanctifies believers,

nevertheless, as here plainly shown, according to the presidency or direction of Christ as Mediator, or as before remarked in accordance with the design of the triune Jehovah. Believers under the Jewish dispensation, referred the salvation of sinners to the same Sovereign will of the Deity. ‘ Create in me a clean heart O God : and renew a right Spirit within me.’ Ps. l. 10. ‘ Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean : from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you : and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh, and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.’ Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27.

It may be objected, that the representation of a new creation is highly metaphorical, and this is readily granted, but if the metaphor is meant to convey any truth to us, it is, that the radical change of character termed *regeneration*, is solely to

be ascribed to divine influence.—But an objector may still urge, that the Deity is hereby represented as transforming men into mere machines, because they would thus be, as it were forced into the way of holiness. But in direct opposition to these sentiments, the Saviour declares, that real freedom is only possessed by those who are the especial objects of God's care. 'Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on him, if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' Again, 'If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. John viii. 31, 32, 36. We may by the way remark upon these passages, that the Son seems not to leave the freedom of the kingdom to the arbitrary application of the Holy Spirit. But in reference to the subject more immediately under consideration, we remark, that if God's immediate superintendency and support, caused mechanical necessity, there could be no freedom of action, for either body or mind in creation, for 'in him we live, and move, and have our

being,' Acts xvii. 28, and this perfect dependence, arises from the relation between the creature and the all-sufficient Creator.— If then in the original creation of man, freedom and uprightnes could consist together ; it is quite clear, that in any after time, even in the career of a depraved moral agent, freedom can consist with any influence to good. Again, if the interference of Deity destroyed the liberty of his creatures, the existence of freedom would be an impossibility for in no corner of his creation, can any change, however trifling take place, without his guiding or restraining it, to fulfil the ultimate purposes of his own will. And yet no fact possesses a more valid proof of existence, than does that of the freedom of moral agency from the *innate consciousness of freedom* in the bosom of every son of Adam. Indeed our enjoyment of life rises in proportion to this very consciousness, as it respects the harmony of the actions of our corporeal frames with the volitions of our minds. We know not, in what way spirit acts upon spirit ; but of the actings of our

own spirits we are perfectly certain from consciousness, and from the same proof are equally certain of the freedom of their actings, and the converted man has this proof as strongly impressed upon his bosom, in reference to his present conduct, as ever he had in reference to any line of conduct, which he had previously pursued. In short, freedom is an original and inalienable property of mind, and therefore whenever any individual is changed, that change happens by a voluntary transition from one set of habits to another. Thus, whenever Christian renovation of character is described in Scripture, we constantly find metaphors used, indicative of the most unlimited freedom; for example, the minds of the apostles and Lydia, are represented as having been *opened* to perceive the truths of the Gospel.* Here not a shadow of force or compulsion appears. The doors, so to speak, are not burst asunder, by the fierce ingress of the arbitrary conqueror, but legitimately opened by the Lord of heaven and earth, and the

* Luke xxiv. 45. Acts xvi. 14.

voluntary slave of sin and death becomes with perfect freedom of volition, the freeman of Christ. Again, this change is resembled to the light shining into darkness. 'For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' 2 Cor. iv. 6. Of this beautifully sublime passage it may be remarked, that whilst it of itself proves the proposition considered in the present section, it also proves that perfect freedom in the moral agent, is the concomitant of the change from darkness to light, 'for joy and gladness' are the attendants upon light, whereas compulsion and servitude never can boast of such accompaniments.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

In no way are the subtle distinctions of all human theories, levelled directly or indirectly against the doctrines of free grace, so completely destroyed as by the strong line of demarcation, which the Scriptures lay

down as separating the Church of Christ from the world. 'There is one body,' says Paul to the Ephesians, chap. iv, meaning the church, and the whole context proves that by 'one,' he means complete, wanting not a single member. 'There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all,' and for the edification of this body every possible care is taken by the Saviour, 'from whom, the whole body fitly joined together and compacted, by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.' v. 16. It was for this mystical body, the Saviour left his eternal throne, and humbled himself even to the death of the cross; for this he ascended up on high, and sways the reins of universal empire, in the character of the glorified mediator; from whose gracious 'fulness' every member in that 'fitly joined and compacted' association, enjoys its healthy action, 'through every joint, or

conduit of supply (*δια πασης αφης της επιχορηγιας*) according to the efficacious agency (*κατ' ενεργειαν*) in the measure of every several part.' The same epistle furnishes us with another lively representation of Christ's peculiar regard for the church.— 'Husbands love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.' Chap. v. 25, 26, 27. Hence the strong expression—'a peculiar people,' applied to the church, by Paul, in Tit. ii. 14: a people considered by the Saviour his most valued property (*λαον περιουσιον*) for which 'he gave' no less than himself, to redeem them from all iniquity, and purify them for himself. Peter also furnishes us with the same ideas, clothed in rather different words, 'ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, 'a peculiar people' (*λαον εις περιποιησιν*) more

literally ‘a people by purchase,’ compare Eph. i. 14. but particularly Acts xx. 28, wherein the sentiment is stated with precision by Paul, in his charge to the Ephesian pastors, ‘to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased (*περιποιησατο*) with his own blood.’ Again, 1 Thes. v. 9. ‘For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but, to obtain salvation,’ more literally hath appointed us ‘to the purchase of salvation (*εις περιποιησιν σωτηριας*) by our Lord Jesus Christ.’ Can language more definitely distinguish between those who are included in the purchase of Christ, and those who are not? ‘All’ said our Saviour, or rather ‘The entire multitude (*παν sc. πληθος*) that the Father giveth me, shall come to me: and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.’ John vi. 37. and in verse 39. And this is the Father’s will, which hath sent me, that of all (of the whole multitude) which he hath given me, I should not lose any thing of it (*εξ αυτου*) but should raise it (*αυτο*) up again at the last day.’ The individuals who constitute this multitude are in several places styled by the

Saviour his sheep. 'He that entereth in by the door, is the shepherd of the sheep, to him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his *own* sheep by name, and leadeth them out; and when he putteth forth his *own* sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers.' John x. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. The rest of mankind, as excepted from this 'multitude' form another 'multitude most generally designated in the Scriptures, 'the world,' to none of whom are any of these privileges vouchsafed, which is not only plainly proved from the tenor of Revelation, but directly stated by the Redeemer himself to the unbelieving Jews -- 'ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you; my sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.' John x. 26, 27, 28. The same truth is ad-

vanced in John vi. 44. 'No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him : and I will raise him up at the last day.' Again, Matt. xi. 25. 'At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes,' compared with 2 Cor. iv. 3. If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.' All these passages plainly prove that God interferes not with the alienated hearts of those called the 'prudent,' the 'lost,' and the term 'hid,' expresses this fact : not denoting any obstruction thrown in the way of mens' minds, but simply placed in opposition to the term 'revealing : ' and the consequence of such hiding or not revealing the truth *in the mind* by the Deity is that 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' 1 Cor. ii. 14. In short, almost in every passage wherein is stated the discriminating selection of God,

a distinction is strongly drawn between the objects of such selection and 'the rest.' Thus if to the 'called' both of Jews and Gentiles, Christ be 'the power of God and the wisdom of God' to the rest he is 'a stumbling block and foolishness.' Peter also, when he calls believers 'a holy nation and a peculiar people' declares, the Saviour to be 'a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to them, which stumble at the word, being disobedient whereunto also they were appointed.' 1 Pet. ii. 8. The word 'appointed' bears the same meaning as 'hidden' before introduced. Such characters were placed (*ετεθησαν*) or left by God to the actings of their own minds; and that dark alienation of heart which constitutes them disobedient, transform the Saviour into a stumbling stone, and a rock of offence. For the sake of brevity I shall conclude these quotations, with one from the Epistle to the Romans, which in the shortest possible compass, elucidates the two views above asserted. 'What if God willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering, the vessels

of wrath, fitted to destruction,' fitted, not by the Deity, for that is impossible, but fitted by themselves: the *passive form* being here most probably used, by the apostle, in opposition to the *active form*, in the following verse, wherein all good is solely ascribed to the direct interference of God. 'And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which HE had afore prepared unto glory.' chap. ix. 22, 23. The apostle seems to have studied in this passage to convey in the fewest words that could be used, the marked distinction between the children of this world, and the children of the kingdom.' The former 'vessels of wrath,' the latter 'vessels of mercy.' The first left, or allowed to fit themselves for destruction; the others, not only 'vessels of mercy afore prepared unto glory,' but the reason is expressed for that fore-preparation, that thereby 'he might show forth his glory. But it is here necessary to reply to an objection urged against us with great emphasis, by the universalists of every shade of doctrine, namely, that if Christ died not for all

men, there is a *natural impossibility* in the way of the salvation of the non-elect. If by a natural impossibility be meant, God's primarily or according to the constitution of nature, forming mankind so as that it was impossible for them to please him; we abhor the idea of such an impossibility as much as any man, for this is in other words charging God with being the author of sin. But if it be meant, that it is impossible for *depraved* man to love God, or any of his ordinances; we strenuously maintain such an impossibility. Such however, is not a *natural* but a *moral* impossibility, arising from the depravation of man's moral constitution. On this abstruse point, a great confusion of sentiments, has arisen amongst Arminians of every class, concerning how far they might proceed in asserting the obligation of the Deity to rectify this depravation. But if we are to believe that this depravation, or alienation of heart, was introduced into the creation with the bare permission of God, those reasonings must be false which lead men to suppose, that by some necessary

obligation as it were, he is required to obviate it altogether, or what is still more incomprehensible, to alter the mental constitution of moral agents during the greater part of their probation, so that they may be placed in *equilibrio*, between the choice of evil, and the choice of good. But what is conclusive against all these modes of reasoning, is, that they legitimately lead to the conclusion, which the employers of them above all things wish to avoid, and which they tauntingly affix to the opinions of their opponents; namely, that the Deity is the author of sin; for upon no ground of equity can it be argued that God is bound to obviate sin, except its existence can claim higher grounds, than his bare permission. In respect to any ordinance of Jehovah whatever, there is no restraint appended to it by him, nor does it contain within itself any repelling principle, so as to debar any moral agent from its use; and therefore we constantly find, that the moral law is presented in its full length and breadth to the acceptance of every man, with all the promises of blessings, attendant upon

the fulfilment of its terms, and with all the unmitigated threatenings for disobedience. The law of the Lord comprised in the short but comprehensive sentence, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,'* in no moment of the moral agent's existence relaxes its obligation to obedience, and in no moment of his probationary existence withdraws the happiness of obedience. There is no impossibility or *repelling principle* in the law of God, that principle is in the depraved creature 'what the law could not do, in that it was weak,' not through itself, 'but through the flesh.' Rom. viii. 3. Now this repelling principle exists in full force, against every ordinance of the Lord whatever; for whilst the law is despised, or changed as it were into a stalking-horse of self-righteousness; the 'life in Christ Jesus' is to the carnal Jew, 'a stumbling block,' and to the carnal Gentile 'foolishness.' It is this liability to the whole range of God's ordinances, which

* Matt. xxii. 37, 39.

forms the broad basis of accountability, and in this close connexion are the ordinances of the 'living God' placed by our Saviour to the Jews. 'Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?' John v. 45, 46, 47. It is upon this broad ground of accountability, that all men, in all periods of their existence, are called upon to fulfil the precepts of the 'Most High,' perfectly irrespective of moral capability; otherwise this monstrous doctrine would be fully established, that the more morally depraved the person became, the less liable he was to moral obligation. Thus the children of Israel, both as a nation and as individuals, were at all times called upon to fulfil every tittle of the moral and ceremonial law, and they were constantly punished for their non-adherence thereto. We have this plainly and continually insisted on, through the whole of the old Testament.—

Take one instance out of many from 2 Kings, chap. xvii. where after showing the constant rebellion of the Jewish people, the writer lays down the ground of their condemnation in verses 13 & 14. 'Yet the Lord testified against Israel and against Judah by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the Lord their God.' Amongst the individual instances, one of the most remarkable, is that of the rich young ruler who came to the Saviour, with the inquiry, of what he should do to be saved? Our Lord, who knew the self-righteousness of his proud heart, more eager to extort applause than to seek instruction, refers him at once to the law of God in its whole extent, 'if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.' And although the fulfilment of them was his

boast, the Saviour proved his real negligence in attending upon their spiritual meaning, in calling upon him to give up his riches, which were the idols of his heart. In conclusion on this point, the final judgment is described to us, as bringing men's characters to the test of the law of God; and it is the standard by which, those, whose characters are not influenced by the universal love it enjoins, must infallibly be condemned. We have this stated with emphatic fulness by Christ, in his awful description of the general judgment, recorded, Mat. xxv. 31—46. If then sinners felt the true character of Jehovah's law, and came to Christ as a way of escape from the penal consequences of its infringement, his salvation is more than sufficient for their every want; but they neither understand the one, nor will see 'any beauty' in the other. Hence arose the necessity of Christ's atonement being altogether vicarious, and of consequence *effectually* vicarious; for an ineffectual vicarial ordinance of God, sounds, to me at least, as absurd as a direct contradiction in terms.

On this very point there is a context constantly wrested from its true meaning, by the followers of Williams, as well as by professed Arminians. I refer to that occurring in the fifth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, which according to their usual mode of criticism, being isolated from its connexion, they seize upon the general terms contained in it, and apparently unconscious of any parallelism, as being meant by the apostle, they vapour with those universal terms, as if by their means the victory was indisputably obtained. But even if we yielded to them the victory, they would dearly purchase it, by being thereby made mere purveyors to a doctrine, which I suppose they reject; and that is, universal salvation; for, by whatever means it be proved that the ‘many of Adam,’ mentioned in v. 19, or rather ‘the multitude’ (ὅτι πολλοί) of Adam, and ‘the many’ or ‘the multitude’ (ὅτι πολλοί) of Christ be identical, by the same means it necessarily follows, that not a son of Adam can be lost; provided it be granted, that Christ is able or sufficient to save the

destroyed of Adam,' for there is not a single word of condition used throughout the whole context, concerning the work either of the first or second Adam. Again, if 'the multitude,' (οἱ πολλοί) or the 'all men,' (πάντες ἄνθρωποι) of Adam, be not typical of 'the multitude' (οἱ πολλοί) and the 'all men,' (πάντες ἄνθρωποι) of Christ, they must be identical, and then Adam can be in no way a type of him that was to come,' v. 14. for in this case the latter would be *de facto* a substitute for the former, and that for the purpose either of obviating sin altogether, or for actually saving every individual of the human race : each of which suppositions is untrue. But if the 'all men' of Adam, be typical of the 'all men' of Christ, then the 'all men' of the latter means all his spiritual seed, without exception, as the 'all men' of Adam means all his carnal seed without exception. The whole tenor of the Epistle proves, that this is the meaning of the passage, for the chief object of the apostle's reasoning is to show the only way of man's justification before God, which

cannot in any manner be 'of works,' because the Gentile grossly transgressed against the Law of Nature, whilst the more privileged Jew transgressed both against the Law of Nature, and the revealed law of God. This he proves in chaps, i. ii. and iii. and to enforce his argument in chap. iv. the apostle proves in answer to an expected objection of the Jews, that justification by works could not be claimed by any man, however comparatively exalted in purity of character; for example, not even by Abraham who was the constant theme of celebration amongst 'his children according to the flesh.' Justification by faith alone, therefore is the plain consequence of the apostle's reasoning, and in the first verse of the fifth chapter, having stated this inference thus 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,' he proceeds to display the glorious fruits which this doctrine produces in the hearts of believers, of whom alone he is writing throughout the whole context. Having finished this description in the eleventh verse, he goes on to

show from what fountain justification by faith, with all its consequences solely springs, and that is from the vicarial substitution of their great representative, ‘who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification,’ and the parallel, which he draws between Adam and his great anti-type, is to establish the important inference, with which the chapter concludes, and the latter clause of which inference is as definitely certain of accomplishment as the former. ‘That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.’

THE ARGUMENTS OF OUR OPPONENTS FOUNDED
ON GENERAL TERMS.

The most formidable arguments, in the estimation of our opponents at least, are those which they claim in common with the professed Arminians, flowing from the supposed universality of Christ’s death attempted to be proved from such texts as affirm, that

Christ died for 'the world,' 'the whole world,' for 'all men,' and such like. But the Arminians thank the followers of Doctor Williams, very little I presume, when they understand the mental reservation of criticism employed by the latter, if criticism it can be called, which is really a dogmatical assertion, to wit, that the Saviour died in one way for some men, and in another for the rest : or which comes to the same thing, that Christ died for all men equally, but that such means of salvation is only made available to those, to whom the Holy Spirit applies it, and that such application is solely appropriated to the elect : or again, as others more broadly state the sentiment, that salvation is not connected with the blood of the Saviour, except so far as it is applied by the Holy Spirit. But to resume the subject of the present section ; the followers of Williams as well as the Arminians, continually quote these passages of Scripture against us, as if we did not believe them as fully as themselves, namely, that Christ is the Saviour of the 'world,' of 'the whole

world,' of 'all men.' The difference of meaning however, which we attach to such passages, arises from the different modes of criticism adopted. Our opponents extract these passages from their respective contexts, and when unrestricted by the standard of interpretation justly involved by such contexts, they boast of an imaginary victory by the mere brandishing of verbiage. Now it may be said in general, before descending to particulars, that no argument can be conclusive, which is solely founded upon the use of the general terms used in the Bible, for upon the very same grounds, doctrines the most contradictory may be equally established. For example, few would attempt to prove that mankind universally will be saved, because the apostle Paul assures us in one place, 'Then (at the general judgment) shall *every man* have praise of God.' 1 Cor. iv. 5. and in another, '*we all*, with open face beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' 2 Cor. iii. 18. And fewer still I

suppose, will be found to argue for the utter condemnation of all men, because John affirms ‘that the *whole world*, lieth in wickedness.’ 1 John v. 19. as also in Revelations, ‘*all the world*, wondered after the beast,’ chap, xiii. 3. Nor will the modern Calvinists be very anxious to prove the universality of the Spirit’s influence from Joel ii. 28 ‘And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon ALL FLESH’ compared with Acts ii. 17, wherein St. Peter shows that the beginning of the fulfilment of this prophecy may be dated from the day of Pentecost. Such use of general terms is not peculiar to the Scriptures, but is warranted by every day practice. But besides this, there was a particular reason why the sacred writers used these terms in reference to the mediation of Christ, arising from the circumstance, that before the advent of the Saviour, the privilege of having a visible church, was wholly confined to the Jewish nation ; and although their own prophets most clearly foretold that such monopoly was finally to be abolished, yet to no prejudice

did the descendants of Abraham more fondly cling than to this, that to be a son of Israel, was absolutely necessary for membership in the true fold of God. Hence arose the necessity for the apostles continually to use the strongest terms in establishing the important fact, that the prophecies concerning the enlargement of Jehovah's kingdom were now to be verified ; ' The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted,' like a banner or beacon ' above the hills,' that is, so elevated upon the lofty mountains, as to be seen above minor eminences from every corner of the earth, ' and ALL NATIONS shall flow unto it.' Isa. ii. 2. The imagery of the prophet is remarkable, as if to awaken the Jews from their deep-rooted prejudices. The gathering of the nations is resembled to the courses of mighty rivers, changed from their downward tendency, upwards to the fountain head of life and truth. When all the types and shadows of the ceremonial law appropriated to the children of Israel, had been abrogated by the crucifixion of our

Lord ; the ‘middle wall of partition’ was broken down between the Jews and the Gentiles, and the latter were hereby allowed to enter into the fold of Christ, and according to the strong language of Paul, to become ‘fellow heirs and of the same body,’ (σύσσωμα :) Eph. iii. 6. That they did not mean, the conversion of the Jews universally, nor of the Gentiles universally is plain, whenever they speak of the church without the use of general terms, for example in John xi. 51, 52 ‘And this spake he (Caiphas) not of himself ; but being high priest that year he prophesied, that Jesus should die for that nation ; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together IN ONE the children of God that were scattered abroad.’ Again in Rev. v. 9. we have the sentiment distinctly stated in the song of the Redeemed ‘thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, *out of* every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.’ Upon this passage we cannot help remarking, although not immediately connected with the subject of the present section, that it will by no

means suit the doctrine of those who would desire to establish a difference between the price of redemption, and redemption itself, or that salvation is not to be connected with the sacrificial offering of the Saviour. But to return to the present subject ; the sacred writers, in order to avoid the circuitous method required in this circumstantial description of the church, adopted a very common substitute in similar instances, namely, that of general terms, and therefore such terms should always be considered under the restriction of the context, or of common sense. But neither Arminians nor modern Calvinists will admit of any restriction, and indeed it is absolutely necessary for the very existence of the theories of each party, that this should be the case, because the unrestricted universality of these terms, and their theories must stand or fall together. Consequently whenever general terms are put in apposition with the mediation of Christ, it follows from their reasonings that such terms as ‘ the world’ ‘ the whole world’ and ‘ all men’ must mean every son of Adam, for to

allow even of a few exceptions, would be absolutely to destroy the whole force of their arguments. Let us at once then bring this criticism to the test, and to save time, apply it only to some of their favorite texts, and see what effect it will produce upon them ; for by the rules of right reasoning, if the definition of a term be accurate, the substitution of its definition in place of it, will not in the slightest way alter the meaning of any passage, wherein such term may occur. For example in 1 John ii. 2, instead of reading ‘He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our’s only, but also for the sins of the whole world,’ let us adopt this mode of explanation and read, ‘He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our’s only, but also for the sins of every son of Adam.’ Compare this passage with that in chap v. 19, altered to suit this criticism, ‘We know that we are of God, and every son of Adam lieth in wickedness,’ and it necessarily follows, that those persons whose sins, in the former verse, he calls ‘our sins,’ and these in the latter distinguished as ‘of God,’ are not sons of

Adam : of course it rests with our opponents to show from what other progenitor they have really descended. It is hardly necessary to remark, that the Calvinistic mode of explanation avoids every such absurdity : and in respect to the former of the two passages just quoted, it may be remarked, that the introduction of the word ‘ propitiation,’ (*ἰλασμός*) seems to have been made use of by the apostle purposely to show the believing Jews, that Christ was the anti-type of one of the principal constituent parts of their material temple, to wit, the golden mercy-seat over which the Shechinah, or visible glory of the living God had usually appeared. Thus John intimated that the spiritual mercy seat was no longer to be confined to a single nation, but was to adorn a spiritual temple formed of ‘ lively stones,’ redeemed *out of* every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.’ Rev. v. 9. Another passage invariably insisted upon by the followers of Dr. Williams is John iii. 16, 17. But here again the substitution of their definition proves the fallacy of their criticism, for suppose we

read ‘ God so loved every son of Adam, that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ According to the theory, or rather theories of our opponents, the premise expressed, and the premise implied are both universal affirmatives, and consequently from such would legitimately flow an universal conclusion, which in the present case would be ‘ that every son of Adam should have everlasting life.’ To state this in plainer language, the reasoning of our opponents goes to transform the verse thus, ‘ God so loved every son of Adam, that he gave his only begotten Son to accomplish their salvation : but the Son fulfilled the whole will of God to the minutest particle of its requirement, triumphantly expressed in the last sentence which he uttered on the cross ‘ it is finished :’ consequently every son of Adam must be saved. Now it is plain, that our Saviour intended to establish no such conclusion in reference to the ages before his appearance upon this earth, and by parity of reasoning not to the ages after

his ascension. Further, the conclusion which our Saviour draws namely, 'that whosoever believeth' or more literally 'that every believer should have everlasting life,' refers to those to whom 'it is given to believe;' Phil. i. 29, in whom also God 'works both to will and to do' Phil. ii. 13. It is clear to demonstration, that this is not the case with every son of Adam. In respect to John, iii. 17. 'For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved:' Christ therein showed Nicodemus, the mistake under which the Jews laboured, concerning the true nature of the Messiah's kingdom upon earth, and to understand the nature of which appears to have formed a primary subject of inquiry in the breast of Nicodemus. The Jews were anxiously expecting a Messiah who would assume temporal dominion, and by the edge of the sword condemn the Gentile world to subjugation beneath the proud banner of Israel. The Saviour declares such conduct to form no part of his intention, because his mission was not one of condemnation, of subjugation,

or of enslavement, but on the contrary of love, of mercy, and for the very purpose of collecting into his church, many millions of that very Gentile world.

The above remarks may be applied with almost the very same effect to the terms ‘all’ and ‘all men,’ for example, one of the passages most commonly brought forward occurs in 1 Tim. chap. ii. Throughout this context suppose the Arminian substitute for the term ‘all men’ be adopted, and let the consequences be considered: v. 1. ‘I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for every son of Adam.’ Truly the Latin church ought to canonize such expositors, who thus furnish it with the clearest scriptural proof for the necessity of prayers for the dead, and consequently proof for the existence of a purgatory. But without appealing to the argument *ad absurdum*, the second verse of this chapter explains the extent of ‘all men,’ namely, by referring it to all ranks and conditions of men* for

* Ἐπὶ πάντων ἀνθρώπων ὑπὲρ βασιλέων, καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐν ἐπιτοχῇ ὄντων

the inference is 'that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness, and honesty' v. 2. Whereas, if 'all men' meant every son of Adam, the inference would have been 'that every son of Adam should be saved.' In Heb. ii. 9. our translation affirms that Christ tasted death 'for every man :' but as the word 'man' is not in the original, the context becomes the proper guide to the selection of a substantive for the adjective 'every,' and even candid Arminian critics allow that the word 'son' is more appropriate than the word 'man,' 'that he by the grace of God should taste death for every son.' Those who are called 'every son' in this verse, are in the following verses of the same chapter styled 'many sons,' 'they who are sanctified,' the Saviour's 'brethren,' and his 'children.' I shall conclude these observations upon the general terms used in the Bible, with a few remarks upon a passage often quoted in triumph by the Arminians ; but very sparingly adverted to by the followers of Dr. Williams, and that probably because they feel that if explained by the

mode of criticism advocated by themselves, it would plainly militate against their favorite tenet concerning the restriction of the Spirit's influence. The passage referred to occurs in John i. 9. 'That was the true light; which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' The only difficulty here arises from our translation joining the participle 'coming' with 'every man,' instead of connecting it with its more appropriate substantive, 'the true light,' thus, 'That was the true light which coming into the world, enlighteneth every man.' This latter translation is approved of by Parkhurst, a very strict philologist, and moreover not a Calvinist. Every preceding remark concerning general terms, applies in full force to this last passage, and it is particularly worthy of remark, that this verse occurs in the very context in which the expressive passage is placed before introduced to notice, which declares the children of God 'not to be born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will man, but of God.' The Arminian meaning attached to 'every man' would infallibly

institute a direct contradiction in the very same context. Nothing probably will show the exact meaning of John in this verse more than by a quotation from the old Scriptures, which seems to be the prototype of this very sentence, in the mind of the apostle ; nor is it a solitary instance, I think, wherein the writers of the New Testament loosely translated, as it were, passages of the Old, by an attentive comparison of which, the student will perceive much light mutually reflected from the one to the other. In Isaiah xl. 5, it is written, ‘And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.’ The terms of the prophet and of the apostle, although not synonymous, are expressive of the same ideas : ‘The glory of the Lord’ answers to Christ ‘the true light,’ ‘Revealed’ ‘to Enlighteneth,’ or ‘shineth upon;’ (*φωτίζει*) ‘and all flesh together,’ meaning both Jews and Gentiles, is plainly the ‘every man’ of St. John.

A DIRECT TENDENCY OF THIS THEORY.

While the abettors of this doctrine styled Modern Calvinism, aim at the removal of what they consider a great obstacle in the way of inquirers after truth ; namely, the doubt whether Christ died for them in particular or not, yet were they to succeed in this removal, such success would only make way for an objection equally formidable in itself, whilst its legitimate consequences would lead to downright enthusiasm. For if Christ died for all men, in the sense of this theory, and if the Holy Spirit apply not his death to all ; of what use can the knowledge be to any individual, that Christ died for him, if he know not, whether the Holy Spirit applies the blood of the covenant to him or not ? Thus the obstacle in the way of inquirers produced by this doctrine, is just as great as that which it pretends to obviate, whilst its direct tendency is to divert the attention from the *object of faith*, to the investigation of the mode of the Holy Spirit's agency upon the

mind of man ; whereby an overheated imagination may conceive that every impulse of fancy, is an inspiration of the Spirit ; whereas a gloomy one, may be cast into despair from not possessing those lively feelings experienced by others. Every species of Arminianism has more or less, a tendency to abstract the mind, from the contemplation of the sublime object of faith, namely, Christ Jesus in all the offices of his mediation, and to confine it to the examination of the mystic recesses of the heart, for the establishment of which is termed religious experience. Modern Calvinism goes beyond Arminianism in this point ; for the very distinguishing feature of the system is, the doctrine of the peculiarity of the Spirit's influence. As the knowledge of such influence therefore, is the only means of securing a certainty of salvation, it can only be a neglect of the theory in this point, at least, which preserves any of its votaries from a perplexing inquiry into the nature of spiritual influence. Consequently it is incumbent upon these theorists to furnish us with a new system of divine and

human philosophy on the nature of Spiritual existence and mode of acting. After they have accomplished this, it will be necessary for them to persuade the church to change their song of praise mentioned in Rev. v. 9. 'And they sung a new song saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood *out of* every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.' For in the first place if all were redeemed, the church could not have been redeemed *out of* the world; and secondly, if the application of the blood of Christ by the Holy Spirit be the only distinguishing point in their salvation, then it would be but reasonable to expect, that the Holy Spirit should receive, through all eternity the principal share of their praises.

Intimately connected with this subject is a question, which has been much agitated in the Christian world, namely *the warrant of a sinner to believe*. This warrant, as stated by the Arminian, arises from the salvation wrought out by Christ for every man; and which salvation only waits for the voluntary

acceptance of each individual. This mode of statement has a speciously pleasing appearance, but upon a nearer examination the sand mixed in the foundation plainly appears, for as the whole of what God is represented to have undertaken for man's salvation has been finished; the accomplishment is left to the will of man, which of course may *reject* this salvation at any given time, as freely as it had accepted of at any other; and thus the certainty of salvation is ultimately based upon the capricious feelings of at best a most imperfect creature. Man may therefore be alternately in a state of belief and unbelief, be a child of God one day, a child of Satan the next, and finally go down to the grave with 'a lie in his right hand.' The Modern Calvinist endeavouring to secure for his plan, the apparent certainty of the *warrant* attached to the Arminian theory, in respect to the universality of the Saviour's death, joins the latter in defence of this point; and to avoid the uncertainty attached to the fickleness of man, introduces his own theory concerning the Spirit's influences being restricted to the elect. As shown above, this entails upon

itself all the difficulties connected with the discovery of the Spirit's agency ; for if this doctrine be the grand distinguishing feature in salvation, no real certainty can be acquired by any one, until he can plainly distinguish the impress of the spirit on his soul. In marked opposition to all such nice distinctions, and puzzling intricacies, the *warrant* for the sinner's belief stands forth with simple but sublime prominency in the Scriptures of truth ; based on no futile foundation, but on the word of the Rock of ages himself, and in terms level to the capacity of every individual. ' Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' Acts xvi. 31 ' Trusting then in the Lord ' with his whole heart,' the humblest believer possesses a seal to his *warrant*, which has been the ratification of every blessing to man since the commencement of time, for ' *Thus saith the Lord*' is sufficient to explain every difficulty and to silence every doubt, provided that in single-hearted belief he lay aside all vain speculations, and take the word of the living God ' as a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path.' Ps. cxix. 105.

CONCLUSION.

It will be said perhaps, that the distinguishing features of what is styled Modern Calvinism, are but slightly varied from those of the doctrine advocated by most of the Calvinistic divines of the former and the preceding centuries; and that any controversy founded upon such variations is uncalled for at the present time. For some years this was my own opinion also, and I entertained not the most distant idea of writing against the system: for although acquainted with Dr. Williams' works, without having been convinced of the truth of his theories, yet I had been in the custom of considering them rather in the light of innocent quack medicines, from which, if some patients imagined that they received real benefit, it would have been an uncalled for officiousness in any one to endeavour to undeceive them, in respect to their efficacy.— But having been unexpectedly placed in circumstances wherein the effects produced by the systematic preaching of these doc-

trines, were pressed upon my attention ; the widely distinct tendency in the teaching, arising from the apparently trivial swerving in theory, became plainly manifest. Preachers of this school seem anxious, and that doubtless with great consistency, to occupy neutral ground, as it were, between Calvinism and Arminianism, although too frequently the object appears to be, rather to conciliate the followers of the latter doctrine, than to convince them of truths, which they not only disbelieve but oppose. The consequences are those which are naturally to be expected ; the Arminian goes away confirmed in his own views, and most probably is loud in his praises of the preacher's liberality ; because he believes him really Arminian in principle. The unlearned Calvinist is perplexed amidst opposing subtleties, and only painfully clear upon one point, and that is, of having received no spiritual edification ; for those only who are fully initiated into all the *shibboleths* of the party, can perfectly perceive the exact object which the preacher has in view. But if the distinguishing features of evangelical

teaching be given up, the opposite doctrine, which caused the defection must be so far strengthened; and thus to weak and unstable minds, the transition from being made familiar with many of the favorite tenets of Arminianism, to the adoption of the whole system, is not only conceivable, but naturally to be expected. Scholars indeed may keep themselves entrenched behind their subtle distinctions, but the generality of hearers have neither the acuteness nor the wish to join together into any thing like a consistent whole, the scattered fragments of the theory from time to time uttered by the preacher: whereas, if a full display of the doctrine was given frequently from the pulpit, few would understand its object, and fewer still embrace it. Like as the disclosure of an intricate piece of machinery to produce little or no effect, would hardly induce any person to study its principles, or follow up the detail of its combination.

“Harmonizing principles” to connect those of the gospel with the principles pleasing to human nature, have always been the har-

bingers of defection in the "churches of Christ." The Laodicean example of mixing the pure warmth of gospel truth with the cold and temporizing philosophy which ruled the times, spread slowly but surely amidst the primitive churches, until almost the whole of Christendom commingled under the banner of a spiritual despot, who, by the policy and craft of a serfish priesthood, swayed the iron sceptre of infallibility over a mass of ignorance, credulity and superstition, amongst whom a poor and despised 'remnant,' as in the days of Elijah,* was only to be distinguished by the deadly persecution against the individuals composing it, which non-conformity brought upon their devoted heads. In Protestant churches also 'harmonizing principles' have uniformly displayed their slow perhaps, but steady tendency: witness the instances of many of the Presbyterian churches, throughout the south and west of England, during the last century, wherein a swerving from primitive doctrine, progressed to the final renunciation of the religion of

* 1 Kings xix. 18.

Jesus, in exchange for the philosophy of Socinus. The Genevan church likewise exhibits a melancholy lesson pregnant with instruction, for in respect to it we have the direct testimony of M. Monod, who was ejected from its ministry for his devotion to the tenets of its founders. He states in his interesting 'Appeal,' that while the originally established principles of that church were not openly contradicted nor directly opposed by the modern successors of Calvin; yet that they had perfectly succeeded in suiting their preaching to the fashionably prevailing opinions of their auditors. In a word, it is of little consequence whether the aberration from scriptural truth commence, with apathy in the teachers, or with attempts to mould it down to an agreement with some vain human system, or with more direct opposition; the progression is equally sure to end in some cold code of human philosophy, diametrically opposed to 'the truth as it is in Jesus.'

We live in an age considered distinguished for liberality; and if by liberality be meant, the universal allowance of perfect freedom to

every individual in the enjoyment, without fear or reproach, of whatever opinions his conscience approves: such liberality is indeed the glory of any age, and of any nation.— But there is a counterfeit bearing the name of liberality, whereby many shrink from ‘declaring the whole counsel of God,’ from the fear of giving offence, while they pacify their own consciences, perhaps by terming what they omit ‘non-essentials.’ We would be far from advocating the necessity of constantly bringing forward and insisting upon, what are sometimes styled ‘peculiar doctrines,’ but there is a vast difference between a prejudiced partiality, and a total neglect; nay farther, between an undue predominance, and a determination to omit. Hence a widely diffused, and serious consequence, which appears to have flowed from such indecision, namely, the establishment of what may be termed *a set and meagre phraseology*; disseminated far and near, and so moulded as not to clash with the sentiments of any section of professing Christians. Thus it very frequently happens, that many would

not only reject but oppose doctrines which are implied in the verbal professions they make; in which professions they were instructed probably from infancy without ever having exercised their minds, in following up the determinate ideas which such instruction if properly attended to, should regularly give rise to. To characters of this stamp, satisfied with vague views of Christianity, controversy will without doubt appear unnecessary, nay mischievous, as tending to break up that unanimity to be so much desired amongst the followers of Christ.— And indeed if controversy be carried on with rancour, and with the mere desire of victory, it is doubtful whether the quiescence arising from a want of investigation be not preferable to the stormy violence of opposition. But on the contrary, controversy when conducted with a right spirit is made useful to many minds, by awakening in them an inquiry into the nature of some truths, of which at the best, they previously possessed only obscure notions, and of others, to which probably they had given no attention what

ever. Many are thus aroused from the lethargy of inattention, and made active in the pursuit of truth, because opposition of sentiment is frequently as useful in calling forth the activity of the soul, as exercise is in calling forth that of the body.

In conclusion, I have only to add, that whilst in the present little work, I have always expressed my opinions freely, perhaps in some instances bluntly, yet as it never was my intention to give offence, so I hope no person will feel offended. My chief object I trust has been, to state and defend some of the subjects interwoven with the doctrine of *salvation by free grace*: and if this essay be made the means of awakening a single individual to just considerations of the 'salvation of Christ,' or even if any one be thereby rescued from 'halting between two opinions,' the author will think himself most amply repaid, and his heart will constantly feel thankful that thus his labour, however insignificant, has not been 'in vain in the Lord.'

RTheol

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